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Security

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THREE POEMS

BY JOHN MILLER

Security

A midnight tide had stormed the wall
That guarded an arc of ocean glass
From outside shock; fishermen remarked
They'd seldom seen the reef-head's morning hair
So capped with surf. But order was restored
And water sheeted smooth against the sand;
Bare-legged dowagers stepped out,
Their wards still clinging to the skirts of shore,
To snip the stems from liquid seaweed beds.
Then one raised her eyes and saw
A scimitar slice through its surface sheath.
"Shark!" snapped out. "Shark!"
And shallows boiled with wildy-churning legs.
The desperado, turned back by the sea,
Was swept toward resolution of his life.
A vigilante boatload soon passed judgment:
A rifle barked, a final spurt,
Then acid blood turned litmus blue to red.
Their trophy dragged across the beach
Stained the sands, as peaceful citizens
Hacked and mauled the six-yard corpse
While children scraped the suckers from its flanks.